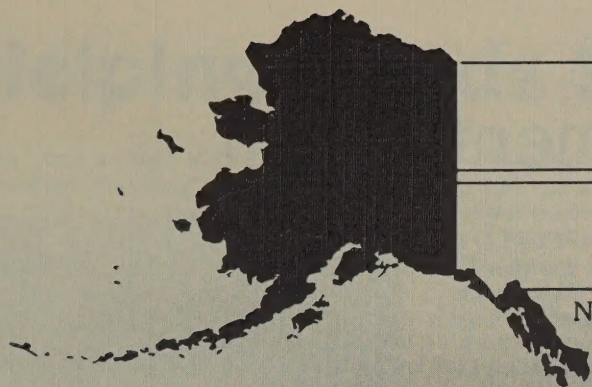


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ALASKA PEOPLE

November 1986

Volume VII

Number XI



inside—

OAS:
Interior's
Airline



ON THE COVER:

OAS planes parked on Lake Hood. With so many lakes in Alaska, floatplanes are often used by resource specialists to reach remote bush locations.

The chief defect of a democracy is that the only political party that knows how to run the country is always the one that's out of office.

BITS & PIECES (11/83)

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Meet the Management Team

Each month ALASKA PEOPLE is featuring one member of the Alaska BLM Management Team. This month, an interview with AFS Manager Tom Owen.

by Susan Swartz

Since he first saw Alaska in 1972, Tom Owen, Alaska Fire Service chief, has wanted to work in the state. It was a training assignment that brought the new Phoenix Lands School director to Alaska then. Later he returned on a fire evaluation.

"It's icing on the cake not only to be coming to Alaska but to be manager of AFS," said Owen. "I love calling old friends and telling them I am in Fairbanks, Alaska. I wouldn't trade my job with anybody I can think of."

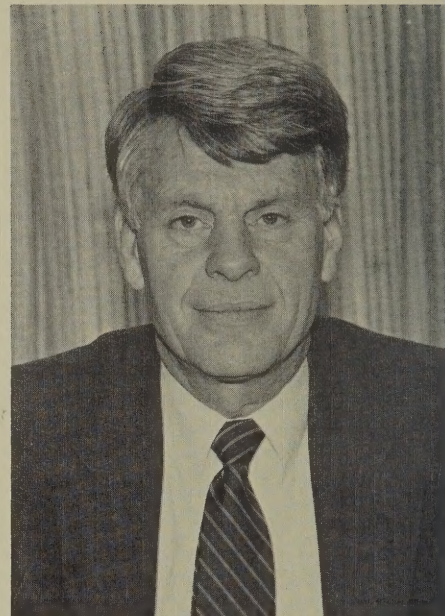
Owen brings this enthusiasm to everything he does. He has settled in and is starting to make his mark on AFS and the community.

Owen arrived in Fairbanks July 7 to take over the manager's job from Roger Trimble, who left for Washington, D.C., to become fire program leader. Owen's BLM career started in 1961 at the Vernal District in Utah, after earning his graduate degree in forestry. Since then he has held varied jobs including fire control officer, forester, realty specialist and program analyst. He was the first coordinator of the Phoenix Training School from 1968 to 1972. In 1972 Owen became district manager at Grand Junction, Colo. He moved to the same position at Carson City, Nev., in 1978.

The AFS position is a new challenge for Owen. "After being a district manager for 14 years, I'm really enjoying my new job," he said. "I really admire the way AFS employees get the job done. They even take the hardships of moving into a variety of facilities in stride."

One reason Owen enjoys his job so much is the comraderie. "I believe that AFS is the best fire organization in the country, and we have a right to be proud."

AFS is not the only thing keeping Owen busy. He and his wife, Jean, bought a house "virtually on the river," Owen said. They are active members of a local church, and Owen has attended meetings of several civic groups. Owen plays the fiddle, guitar and harmonica and has played at church services and a



Tom Owen

wedding reception. He has also joined a bowling team.

Being in Fairbanks also gives Owen a chance to get acquainted with his grandson. Owen's son Adam attends the University of Alaska. Another son, Luke, lives in Colorado; and a third son, Joe, is in the Navy.

Owen is using all his enthusiasm to make his new community his home. Fairbanks will be better for having him here.

THANKSGIVING

*If I am thankful for my toys,
I must be glad to share
If I am thankful for my friends,
I'll show them that I care.*

*If I am thankful for my home,
I'll help to make it gay;
I'll try to like what others like
And not just my own way.*

*The "thank you's" that come just from
lips God has a right to doubt.
I'm trying this Thanksgivingtime
To act my "thank you's" out.*

—EDITH MAY CUNNINGS



Helping Hands Stretch BLM Budget

Is your budget shrinking and your workload doubling? Do you feel like you could do so much more if only you had the time and people to do it? BLM's volunteer program may be just the answer you need to get the job done.

"BLM volunteers range from high school and college students seeking job experience to retired professionals donating their expertise," says Bob Moore, volunteer coordinator.

"In 1982 we started the program with one volunteer. Last year there were 65 volunteers."

BLM volunteers do vegetation studies, mineral field exams, clerical work, fossil collection, cartographic work, endangered plant species inventory and creel census; assist the public at visitor information centers; and read for a blind employee, to mention just a few jobs.

"The possibilities for using volunteers in BLM are virtually limitless," says Moore. "Figures show that for every 96 cents spent, we get a return of \$8.55 in benefits."

Volunteers are available through many different programs including:

Student Conservation Association (SCA), — a private nonprofit organization which solicits resource-oriented students from high schools and colleges.

Kiwanis, Rotary, Girl and Boy Scouts, Campfire and other service clubs.



Libby Riddles volunteered her time to talk to BLM employees.

Work Incentive Program — helps single parents gain entry-level work experience.

Community Work Service Program — helps ex-offenders readjust to society.

Job Training Partnership Act — administered by the state and municipality.

Retired Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) for senior citizens with spare time.

United Way Touch America Project (TAP) — organizations looking for good-will projects.

Green Thumb Program — an organization of older Americans who help to beautify America.

Local Anchorage and Fairbanks university students are also looking to gain work experience.



BLM uses volunteers to help with resource inventories, some of which involve using specialized skills.

The final report on the volunteer hours for FY86 is complete. The hours contributed by FDO's 49 volunteers totaled 6,727 hours, translating into \$56,827; ADO's 135 volunteers contributed 6,696 hours totaling \$52,723 in benefits to BLM.



Volunteer Don Martin (left) and BLM Wildlife Biologist Craig Altop inventory fish.

How Do I Go About Getting a Volunteer?

To get a volunteer you must briefly describe the following to your volunteer coordinator:

1. the tasks you need completed,
2. the working conditions (office or field),
3. the types of equipment the volunteer may use,
4. the skills or knowledge required,
5. the training required or if it will be provided, and
6. the amount of supervision provided.

Representatives from the state office and each of the districts recently developed a volunteer implementation plan which will include the following:

1. a slide show promoting the volunteer program,
2. a poster contest,
3. a brochure on volunteer opportunities, and
4. a volunteer handbook for supervisors.

"Employees sometimes worry that volunteers are taking away jobs. This is not true," says Statewide Volunteer Coordinator Bob Moore. "They are used as a supplement to the permanent BLM workforce. They are an excellent means by which to get those projects done which otherwise wouldn't be completed due to lack of time and funding."

Next time you feel swamped, why not request a volunteer to help you!

Frey Detailed to Africa

by Susan Swartz

Tom Frey tends to understate. His description of the country of Zaire, in western Africa, was "different, very different!" Frey returned September 23 from a three-week assignment there.

Normally Fire Coordination Center chief for the Alaska Fire Service, Frey was on fire detail in Boise, Idaho, when an order came in from the Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance. This division of the Agency for International Development in the State Department requested a team to assess a reported locust invasion. The assignment: develop alternatives for handling the problem and implement the plan.

Frey was selected because of his experience overseeing logistics for the often complex fire situations in Alaska's huge land area.

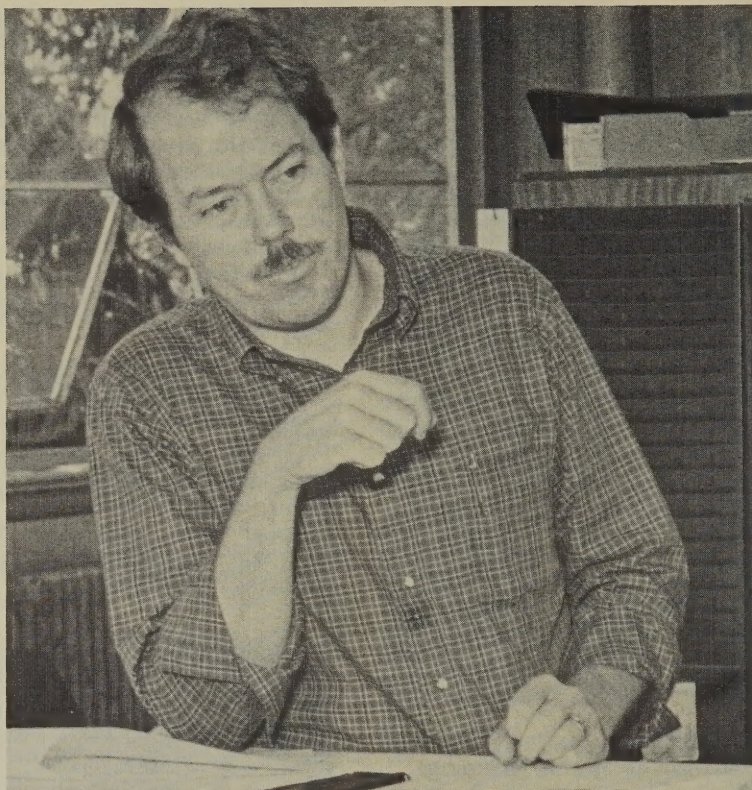
The group arrived in Zaire August 30 after numerous briefings in Washington, D.C. "I am happy to report," Frey said, "that we did not find any infestation. Initial reports of the problem were a bit overblown." It appears that during the harvest season in November 1985 there was a larger-than-normal number of grasshoppers, not locusts. Communication in the country is such that this report did not get back to the government of Zaire until August 1986. That report led to the call for assistance from the United States.

The team spent 14 days in the bush, traveling about 1,200 miles on "roads that make some of Alaska's gravel roads look like superhighways," said Frey. "I was considering a kidney transplant.

"Zaire is a very poor country, very underdeveloped but impressive when flying over the Congo Basin rain forest."

Most people in Zaire are totally dependent on subsistence. "The clothes your parents gave to the church — they're wearing them," Frey said. Instead of the tribal costumes seen on television, the people wore Dallas Cowboys t-shirts.

Frey will never forget his chance to see some of Africa, and he has numerous pictures to show. He intends to put together a slide show for his Fairbanks co-workers and will also show it at the National Fire Management Conference in Seattle.



Tom Frey

Teach Someone to Read and Write

By the year 2000,
two out of three
Americans could be
illiterate.

One in five Americans is functionally illiterate. In Alaska, functional illiteracy affects one out of seven. That's 62,000 people! The inability to effectively read or write affects the ability to reach full employment potential and leads to mental hardships, frustration and a high suicide rate.

YOU can help! There are several local organizations working with the functionally illiterate; all desperately need volunteers. Further information may be obtained from the following organizations:

Anchorage Literacy Project, 337-1981

Adult Basic Education, 276-6007
Citizenship Training, 248-1471.

Collars Signal Critical Habitat

by Sharon Durgan Wilson

Wildlife biologists Jim Silva and Roy Masinton of the Arctic Resource Area and a team of biologists from the Alaska Department of Fish and Game recently collared 17 caribou in the Teshekpuk herd.

The purpose of the ongoing project is to try to pinpoint the caribou wintering areas, migration routes and calving grounds in order to identify critical habitat. The Teshekpuk herd is the primary source of subsistence hunting for the people of Barrow and Nuiqsuk.

The collaring project started in 1981 when ADF&G and BLM staff collared 20 caribou in the Teshekpuk area. Of those, three are still alive and their collars are still working. Most of the other collars were returned to ADF&G after the animals were killed by hunters. "It is amazing that despite the harsh arctic conditions, three of the collars are still working," Silva says. "Most collars only last three years."

The team spent four days putting on the new collars. The ADF&G biologists darting the animal must be licensed by the Food and Drug Administration since the drug used is a narcotic. Silva

and Masinton located each caribou by plane after which the biologists darted the animal from a helicopter.

Participating ADF&G biologist John Trent now lives in Barrow where he can

The increase in oil and gas exploration in the last few years has spurred BLM and Fish & Game biologists to try and pinpoint critical caribou habitat. By radio collaring caribou, biologists are able to get a better idea of how exploration affects caribou migration routes, calving grounds and wintering areas.

keep a closer watch on the herd during the winter. Before this, the cost of flying from Fairbanks to the Teshekpuk area, only to find that the weather had turned bad, proved expensive and prevented the acquisition of sufficient data for statistics. Trent can now make short flights over the area on the rare days of good weather.

"We have a pretty good idea of where the calving grounds and wintering areas are after gathering data for the last five years," Silva says, "but we would like to see it refined. We need to keep a good handle on the calving area, especially with the possibility of future oil and gas development."

Silva says the Teshekpuk herd population has been increasing for the last five years, from an estimated 5,000 animals in the early '80s to 12,000 counted from an aerial photosurvey in 1984. This increase is due in part to better counting techniques, but other herds in the North Slope area are also increasing. The team hopes to successfully complete another aerial photosurvey next year.



Fish and Game biologists record data on a drugged caribou before attaching a radio tracking collar.

OAS - Interior

by Ed Bovy

This is the third in a series of articles featuring BLM's sister agencies within the Department of the Interior, their missions and how they interact with BLM.

What do these BLM resource programs have in common: tagging caribou, setting a section corner, surveying a Native allotment, building a new recreational cabin, patrolling a wild and scenic river, and conducting a 3809 mining inspection?

Answer: BLM staff probably went to the field by way of the Office of Aircraft Services (OAS).

When a BLMer needs an airplane or a helicopter, the order is made through OAS. If, for instance, the Alaska Fire Service wants to try a new or different type of aircraft, OAS will find it. "We're always looking for the aircraft which will give us the biggest bang for the buck," said AFS Aviation Chief Bob McAlpine.

When a BLMer needs an airplane or a helicopter, the order is made through OAS.

OAS is an agency in the Department of the Interior. Headquartered at the Boise Interagency Fire Center in Idaho, OAS was created here in Alaska in 1973 as a pilot program. It was so successful that it was extended to the continental United States a few years later. Prior to 1973 agencies such as BLM, the National Park Service, the Fish and Wildlife Service and the Geological Survey each had their own aircraft division which contracted for aircraft services and maintained their own separate fleets of planes.

Mike Davis, OAS's acting Alaska regional director, said, "I remember a few occasions back then when we had two planes from two agencies each taking one passenger to a meeting at the same time and at the same place. That's why OAS came to be — to save money and make more efficient use of Interior's aircraft.

"But OAS has other functions as well. By centralizing the control of aircraft operations, we are able to set uniform standards which now have become Interior's standards nationwide," he said.

"OAS has been a trendsetter in centralizing procurement," said Gene



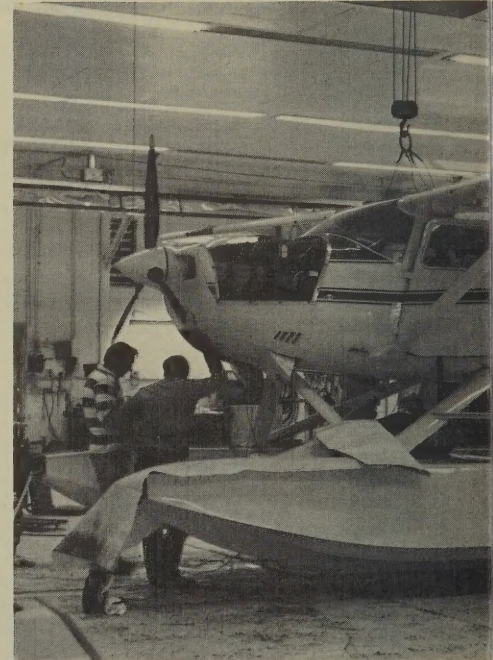
OAS contract aircraft are used heavily by the Alaska Fire Service for fighting fires,

Ori of OAS's technical services section. "For example, here in Alaska we provide all fuel for both OAS and contract planes. We go through 650,000 to 1 million gallons of fuel a year, depending on the fire season. So you can see that we can get a good discount based on volume," he said.

Alaska has the only regional field office, a fact indicative of the volume of operations here. Davis estimates that about one-third of the total hours flown nationwide are flown here in Alaska. Since BLM has been the primary user of aircraft in support of programs such as fire and cadastral survey over the years, some OAS employees and planes came from BLM.

OAS owns and maintains a fleet of 44 planes for Interior Department use. Most of the planes are stationed in the field throughout the busy summer and winter months. The OAS offices along International Airport Road provide maintenance support for the DOI fleet which includes a variety of craft including the Grumman Goose, Cessna 185, Supercub, Argosy and others.

But OAS is more than just flying planes. For example, OAS is responsible for approving the pilots and



OAS owns and maintains a fleet of 44 planes. Mechanics stay busy keeping the planes in

or's Airline



rying cargo and personnel.



for Interior Department use. OAS's
rating safely.

planes of commercial flying services that wish to carry government employees on contract operations. OAS inspectors even give pilots a "behind the wheel" test to insure competency.

Safety is a major consideration. Pilots must have a minimum of 1,500 hours of pilot-in-command experience plus fly at least 100 hours a year to remain certified. Maintenance records can be and often are inspected at any time by OAS.

"Our accident rate, as measured by hours flown, has been in a continuous state of decline since OAS was formed," said Ori. "For example, our accident rate for helicopters is one-third the nationwide industry average," he added.

During the summer of 1984, almost 27,000 hours in all types of aircraft were flown in Alaska and no personal injuries were recorded.

During the summer of 1984, almost 27,000 hours in all types of aircraft were flown in Alaska and no personal injuries were recorded. That same year, OAS personnel trained 536 people in safety, contracts and other subjects; conducted 34 aviation safety and other management sessions; and made 32 field safety inspections.

While much of the flying is of a routine nature, there are occasionally some "exotic" jobs that come up. Lee Svoboda, chief of OAS' division of flight operations, nominated several projects as the most interesting. "We have a one-of-a-kind Grumman Goose that has been specially modified to monitor the migration of humpback and grey whales in the Arctic Ocean for Minerals Management Service. The plane has some very sophisticated global navigation systems and video cameras and is specifically designed for long-range surveys.

"OAS also gets involved in wildlife tagging and transport. Tagging for many species seems to be on the increase in Alaska, which would indicate a high level of interest in how human activities may impact wildlife.

"And we also had what we called 'the case of the geese that couldn't fly.' A few years ago, we arranged for some Canadian geese to be flown to a North

Dakota refuge for breeding. They were later returned to the Aleutian chain where the Fish and Wildlife Service had removed foxes."

The OAS approach is working according to the General Accounting Office, which calls its benefits "identifiable and significant." OAS Alaska region is still growing and is now halfway around the world, having recently added Hawaii and the Trust Territories of the South Pacific to its responsibilities.



Coordinating aircraft and people is a full-time job for OAS's Janis Frank.



The upcoming arrival of the new light infantry division at Fort Wainwright has triggered lots of moving at the Alaska Fire Service. The smokejumpers took their 40-foot tower, used to hang and check parachutes, with them when they vacated their facility. Two cranes, one on each side of the tower, picked it up and carefully positioned the structure onto a truck. They reversed the process at the new site, where a concrete pad had been poured to receive the tower.

Alive and Well in Fortymile Country

by Sharon Durgan Wilson

Once the home of a full-fledged resource area, BLM's Fortymile field station, in Tok, has seen many changes in recent years as land ownership patterns changed, and with them BLM's role.

The Fortymile staff, made up of natural resource specialists Jim Sisk and Bob Burrit and public contact representative Vicky Brinkman, was involved in many interesting projects last summer.

With the small staff and high summertime use by the public, the volunteer program has become increasingly important in the Fortymile.

This summer saw the advent of the first campground host program for the Fairbanks District, and it was a major success. Harry and Phyllis Hassinger, a retired couple who had previously worked with the Peace Corps, were headquartered at Walker Fork Campground on the Taylor Highway. They maintained the campground, built new bulletin boards and information

kiosks, painted tables and talked with campers.

A group of local volunteers led by Larry Roberts planned and worked on a one-mile nature trail from the Chicken Guard Station to the Mosquito Fork dredge. The volunteers hope to have the trail completed before next summer.

Another volunteer group from the area is compiling an information brochure on the road system of the Fortymile area. Chris Thorsrud and Sunny Robinson traveled the area collecting information, taking pictures and researching library materials on the history of the area. Sisk will be coordinating their efforts as they enter the huge volume of historical data into the computer this winter and condense it into a brochure format. "We hope to have the brochure available to next summer's visitors," Sisk added.

Joanne Burritt volunteered her time to photograph use sites on the Fortymile River. A complete log of river

by milepost was started by BLM in 1974.

For the past two years an effort has been made to update and compare differences in sites used for camping, mining or other purposes. This information will aid in the projection of time needed for natural reclamation of disturbed sites.

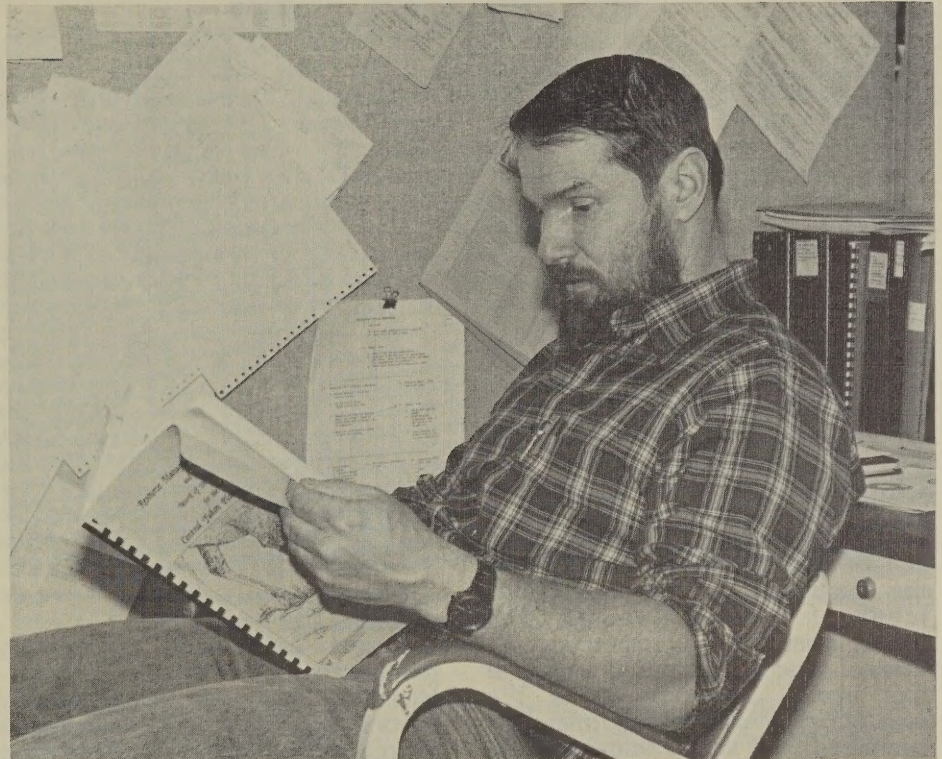
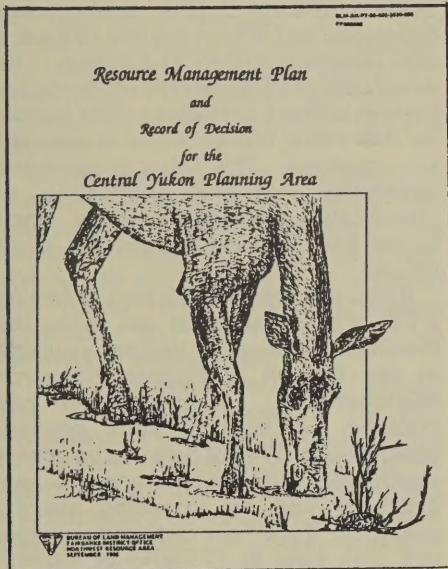
While the rest of the staff spent most of the summer in the field, Brinkman answered questions and handed out information to 433 visitors to the BLM office. "I love meeting all the travelers in the summer," Brinkman said. "It's busy all the time."

The winterization of buildings is one sure indication that summer is over. In September temporary employees Rick Meis and Doug Simons and volunteer Julie Tabler winterized the Chicken Guard Station and four campgrounds. Back in Tok they washed sleeping bags and bedding, and inspected and repaired tents in preparation for next season's work.

The Central Yukon Plan is Out

by Susan Swartz

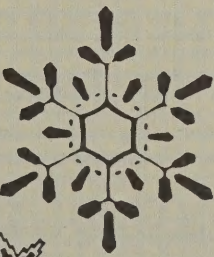


The Central Yukon Resource Management Plan is history. State Director Mike Penfold signed the Record of Decision for the Central Yukon Planning area on September 26, ending three years of hard work. Copies of the ROD are now available from public affairs or the land office.





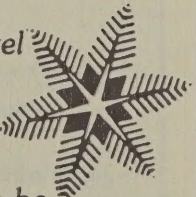
Keith (Woody) Woodward looks over the new Central Yukon Record of Decision.

One unique feature of the Central Yukon Plan is that it designates 2,767,861 acres of land as Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACECs). ACECs are areas with important historic, cultural or scenic values, or fish and wildlife resources. Congress has ruled the ACEC designation "...shall not, of itself, change or prevent change of the management or use of public lands." Each ACEC is individual and has particular values. ACEC designation does not limit the use of the land except as needed to protect the special values identified. BLM writes an individual management plan for each area which determines what uses will be allowed.


This is the first acreage in Alaska to be officially designated as ACECs. "This put BLM Alaska in the leadership position in the amount of acreage in ACEC status," Planning Team Leader Woody Woodworth said. "In one swoop of the pen, Penfold created more ACECs than the total ACEC acreage in California." Until now California BLM had more land, 835,000 acres, designated ACECs than any other state.




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the state office division secretaries.
For more information call John Miller at 271-5721.
See you at the luncheon!



Mike Penfold

Runners Race with Spam

by Danielle Allen

For some ADOers, slipping on a pair of running shoes is as natural as going into the field. For those belonging to the core of serious runners at ADO, racing against their peers is the only way to stay competitive.

On September 19 and 20 runners Jan Sosnowski, realty specialist; Kathy Tietz, supervisory contact representative; Kirk Rowdabaugh, natural resource specialist; John Catlin, environmental scientist; and Terry O'Sullivan, outdoor recreation planner, competed in the "Klondike Trail of '98" road relay. Rounding out the 10-member team were former BLMers and friends.

Considered by many runners to be the running event of the year, the 110-mile relay race began in Skagway. The runners traveled over steep mountains, rolling hills and flat stretches of gravel and paved roads in Alaska, British Columbia and the Yukon before finishing in Whitehorse.

"We were sponsored by a "sleazy" bar in Spenard known as Mr. Whitekeys Fly-By-Night Club," says O'Sullivan. Adorned in club T-shirts and hats, each team member passed off a seven-ounce can of Spam, Whitekeys' favorite food and the club's mascot.

Tietz, the first runner, took to the pavement at 10 p.m. Having just recovered from the flu, she said, "pumping adrenalin and the excitement of the race kept me going." After running her nine-mile leg she joined the support team car which followed each runner.



(left to right) Terry O'Sullivan, Kirk Rowdabaugh, Jan Sosnowski and Jim Anderson train to run the Klondike Trail of '98 road race.

Checking in as the fourth runner was Sosnowski who sped along in the darkness for 13 miles. "It was a real trip...It was dark but you could see," she said. "After a while your eyes got accustomed to the darkness."

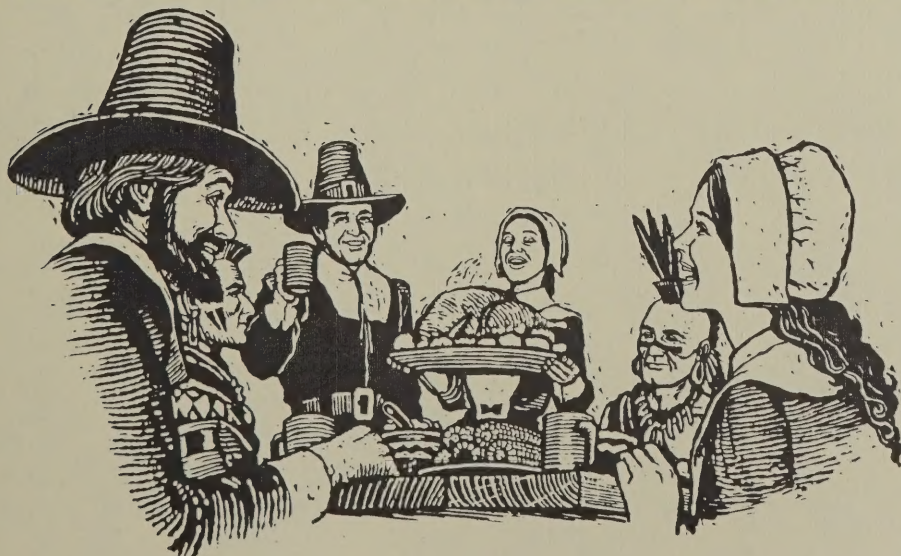
Sosnowski passed the Spam to Rowdabaugh who took off like a bullet. Somewhere in the midst of his 13.8-mile run he remembered the team's motto — Start slow and taper off — and tapered his pace to a more acceptable jog. He said, "This race is different from anything I've ever done. I'll train next year!"

O'Sullivan, who is presently training for the Honolulu Marathon, ran his 16

mile-jaupt easily. He said, "We set a world record for the transport of Spam!"

Cool as a cucumber was Catlin, who stripped to his shorts to run his 12 hilly miles in the heat of the day. "It reminded me of running in Hawaii...those undulating Hawaiian hills," he said.

The last runner was former BLMer Jim Anderson. As he neared the end of his 11.8 mile-run, he was joined by the rest of the team. With Spam held high, the team crossed the finish line together to place 21st of 33 co-ed teams. Their time was 14 hours and 56 minutes.



**"Now thank we all our God
With hearts and hands
and voices.
For wondrous things He's
done
In whom this world rejoices."**

Applause

SUSTAINED SUPERIOR PERFORMANCE AWARD

Sheila Brown, Staffing Specialist, ASO
Division of Administration
Valerie Honeman, Staffing Assistant, ASO
Division of Administration
Nida Follante, Staffing Clerk, ASO
Division of Administration
Joy Brozovsky, Personnel Clerk, FDO
Barbara J. Taylor, Personnel Clerk, FDO
Barbara Masinton, Personnel Clerk, FDO

SPECIAL ACT AWARD

Susan Erickson, Supervisory Documents
Examiner, ASO Division of Conveyances
Shirley Macke, Miscellaneous Documents
Clerk, ASO Division of Conveyances

10-YEAR PIN

Donald H. Bell, Aircraft Freight Loader,
AFS
Mary M. Huntington, Miscellaneous
Documents Examiner, ASO Division of
Conveyances

30-YEAR PIN

Jack B. Grafton Jr., Equal Employment
Specialist, ADO
Louise F. Todd, Administrative Services
Manager, ADO

MOVING ON October 1986

Ted Courtright, Communications
Specialist, AFS
Corine Norris, Clerk Typist, ASO Division
of Support Services
Rafael Mojica, Clerk Typist, ASO Division
of Mineral Resources
Joe Vallieres, Warehouseman, ADO
Alnetta Jordan-Lakey, Clerk Typist,
FDO

Personal Notes

ASO's **Sharon Dean** was busy helping flood victims following the October flooding in Southcentral Alaska. As a member of the Alaska Division of Emergency Services, Dean monitored ham radios in Wasilla for two days then flew to Seward as part of a flood victim assessment team.

"We set up an office in Seward where I interviewed flood victims requesting emergency assistance. In the week that our office was open, we interviewed 99 families. The needs were varied; one man lost his trailer when the water overturned it. The only thing he had left were some papers he took with him upon being rescued. Another man was camping; the river rose and swept away all of his belongings.

"I learned to listen to people who had been through a disaster," says Dean. "Oftentimes what they needed most was someone who would just sit and listen as they talked about their losses."

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